

Turtle in a half-shell

Cowabunga!

Introduction: Beneath the City of Splendors are a crime-fighting family that hide in the shadows, cleaning the streets of punks and villains. But the Shmoot clan is running amok, and their leader becoming a serious threat.

A 2 to 3-hour adventure for four 3rd level players

by TV JACOBS



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TURTLE IN A HALF SHELL

Adventure Core Facets

GOAL: Defeat the rising might of a nefarious criminal gang

PLACE: In the city of Waterdeep > the lair of the Shmoot clan

VILLAIN AND GOALS: Grater : dominate the criminal underbelly of the city

Adventure Synopsis

This adventure is based on the 1990s cartoon Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, with fantasy flair.

The party of ninja turtles rescue one May O'Nelly, to discover that the source of the high increase in crime may be due to the Shmoot clan. They mission to learn of the clan's lair, and defeat their leader.

RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

When preparing to DM this adventure, some tools might help you start strong and help in running it smoothly.

1. Getting the PCs together

It's worth having the players discuss beforehand what their lives are like as a sewer-resident family of crime-fighting youths.

These are four brothers, who have lived together their whole lives, and trained together to fight crime.

2. Starting the Adventure

The adventure begins with a street-side battle between some punks and the turtles; starting *in medias res*.

Make sure players have read through their skills and abilities. The adventure assumes that the players understand how DnD combat works.

3. Things to prepare

Character sheets, dice, a Players Handbook ready.

The player-characters are loosely based on the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. Each of them a Turtle.

Leonardo (Fighter); Raphael (Barbarian); Michelangelo (Bard); Donatello (Wizard).

PART 1 -

Life on the streets

“Yes, dudes and dudettes, major-league butt-kicking is back in town!”

— Michelangelo

When everyone is ready to begin, read the following:

The cobbled side-streets of the shadier areas of Waterdeep are often stricken with that all-too-familiar sound of violence and opportunists, “What you got there lady?” / “Coming around this part of town? You must be brave” / “Me no like the look of your face!”

You all peer up from a storm-water drain in the Dock Ward at the ankles of five figures, one of which you make out to be a woman. For a moment she chirps back, no damsel in distress. But she is clearly outnumbered, and these punks are taking advantage on one of your streets. Under the cover of darkness you steal away into the shadows of this alleyway, can you each describe your character please?

You make out two bandits (female) and two thugs (male). The larger of the thugs appears to be an actual ogre, who grabs the woman.

She tries to scream but is stifled by a massive hand across her face.

The alleyway is long, maybe 15ft wide. A metal fire escape staircase clings to one side of a building on the far end of the alley; and stacked crates and barrels block some of the streetlamp light on the other.

You all get one free round before everyone will take their turn in the initiative. What do you do?

Allow the players one free surprise round to take an action of any kind. And then...

Ninjas in the night

ROLL INITIATIVE!

The ne'er-do-wells assaulting the innocent woman are:

One **Ogre**, two **bandits** and a **thug**

See *Monster Manual* for stats.



If the players interact with the woman during the combat in any way, she is willing to talk. This is MAY O'NELLY (a writer for the Daily Flugelhorn, a somewhat failing newspaper in Waterdeep).

Once the fight is over, the players hear the familiar clip-clop of the City Watch on horseback.

If they don't immediately take May with them, she will ask to come with.

Back home

Life in the sewers of Waterdeep could be called peaceful.

There is not much that wanders down here, save for a street urchin that has lost its way every now and again. Nevertheless, you arrive back at your lair.

An intersection of piping and subterranean maintenance areas have been fashioned to resemble something of a home. Various carpetings don the floors, and paintings hang on the walls. Each turtle seems to have their own bedroom of a sort, resembling their unique personalities. On one side is a small training dojo, and a ramshackle kitchen on the other.

Your father, Master Shard, welcomes you back. And in a wizened old voice says, "the purpose of the martial arts is to preserve happiness... is that what you have been doing?"

He looks at you accusingly.

Master Shard

A humanoid rat, somewhat stooped, and resting one hand on a gnarled-wood cane. His gaze is soft, almost welcoming - but the brothers know the stoic truth behind that kindness.

[If required, use the *Assassin* stat block in the *Monster Manual* for Shard, replacing the swords for a quarterstaff]

He asks after their evening, berating them for their vigilante behaviour. But he will notice May quite quickly and ask for details. [*allow the players to drive the scene though*]

Danger Unfolding

May was looking into dodgy dealings that a mega-corporate chemical company had been accused of.

Minbendo is the name of the company. It's founder and CEO is kept in relative secrecy, but May has learnt that the Sagisman family run various offshore accounts related to the company. A lot of work across Faerun, with Neverwinter, and even some engagements with a land named Chult.

May has two leads.

See "Getting leads" below to have the players devise their plan of attack.

PART 2 - Finding the Shmoot

“Wise man say: Forgiveness is divine, but never pay full price for late pizza”

— Michelangelo

Getting leads

One scene can be played out in this moment - everything else is fast-travelled by the DM.

The players have two options: One - to sneak into the penthouse of the CFO Mrs. Sagisman (granddaughter of the founder: Ashvon Sagisman) at night; Two - find an informant in the black market, Mr. Watan, during the day (the latter requires disguises).

Fumi Sagisman

May has the address for the CFO of Minbendo - a large home in the North Ward.

If the turtles might get her to reveal the whereabouts of the source of their criminal underbelly, they could put a stop to it. But getting her to admit that such a thing even exists might be hard enough.

Fast-travelling narrative so that the players find their way into the main living room of Sagisman's house (at their chosen time of day/night), allow the players to drive the encounter with Fumi.

If/when they wish to push her for information, they need to succeed on a PERSUASION/INTIMIDATION check (DC 15) dependant on *how* they go about doing this.

Hideshi Watan

May has information on a merchant of chemicals, magics and potions that apparently deals with Minbendo. He is also a member of the Zhentarim.

In the Castle Ward, deep within the Market, is a shop called Thai Thanic. It masquerades as a street food stall - but if you tell Watanabe that 'the river runs softer where it is widest' he will know that you are after information.

Hideshi will provide information freely for 50GP, or can be convinced on a successful PERSUASION/INTIMIDATION check (DC 14) dependant on *how* they pry it from him.

A: Ninja Warrior lair

Both Fumi and Hideshi can eventually share the location of the lair of the Shmoot clan, and that it is being run by a man only known as The Grater.

On a substantially large piece of land, between the Dock Ward and the City of the Dead, is a mansion of a property. Either of the informants will provide the address.

Once the party learn where the main hideout is for the Shmoot clan, they can head that way.

[The large property is essentially made up of Ninja Warrior obstacles before they can get to the main building itself. This is obviously to keep the Shmoot ninjas in good shape.]

Edges

A deep moat runs the border of the premises. Short platforms run its width further into the centre, at various points in the moat. Sort of like stepping stones. They are angled to the left and right, seemingly needing someone to jump with one leg from one to another leg on the next, and so on to the other side.

To succeed, each player needs to pass an ACROBATICS check (DC 12) or else fall into the moat. At that point they can choose to swim across in despair, or try again.

Inner

The next ring is a 15ft deep pit with spikes. Running across its 30ft length are high bars with red T-shapes suspended below.

It would seem that a person needs to hang on to the T-bar and swing it from left to right, so that you can grab the next bar - and then do these 3 times to get across.

As it is an upper body strength test too, to succeed, each player needs to pass an ATHLETICS check (DC 13) or else fall into the pit. They will then take 2d10 piercing damage. If the falling player succeeds on a Dexterity Saving Throw (DC 11) that damage is halved - as they narrowly avoid the major spikes.

Final

The last ring before the large building ahead of the players consists of two parallel strips of metal, set over a 40ft drop. (clearly the Shmoot have excavated the land here a lot)

In order to cross, each player will need to shuffle their way using their hands and feet against each opposite wall.

Each player needs to pass a straight DEXTERITY check (DC 13) or else fall into the pit. They will then take 4d6 falling damage. There is a ladder out of this pit only on the end where the obstacle starts.

B: The House of the Shmoot

After the third and final ninja obstacle, the party stands at the entrance to an obscenely large building. It lacks maintenance, and seems largely nondescript - drawing little attention to it. But the lights are indeed on in places throughout the mansion.

If the front door is not appealing to the party, there are various balconies and ledges on the first and second stories of the facade of the house.

However they enter the premises, the first corridor they face is as follows:

Backwards Corridor

The party enters into a corridor that looks normal but ends in a dead end with a stone wall. There is no light in the room.

When the party reaches the dead end and turns around there is a brick wall, essentially trapping them inside the corridor. The Shmoot seem to be using a kind of Ninja-magic to protect their lair from intruders.

The new brick wall has an inscription (INVESTIGATION check, DC 12) that reads "*Keep your eye on the wall.*"

If they walk backwards while staring at the brick wall they will walk into the next room.

Rack Room

In the room adjoining the enchanted first corridor is a torture rack with a salary man stretched out upon it, on the far side of the room.

Every time the party gets closer to the rack it tightens and he lets out an audible scream in pain.

The players must find a way to remove the man from the rack without stretching him too much. If they approach without a solution, stretching the man, more than 3 times. The man passes out from the pain.

If they can free him, he thanks them and flees for his life. He has no information to share. He was jumped on his way home the previous night.

The party may proceed throughout the house.

A general STEALTH check might keep them engaged with the purpose of sneaking up on the Grater (DC 12 majority).

Rec Room

On the next floor up, at some point the party will come across an open barracks room; where members of the Shmoot are gathered - resting/training etc;

There is a way of sneaking about through the many shadows in the room - for they are not immediately spotted, behind a large dragon statue situated by the door. Or they can fight their way through - treating the Shmoot as one-hit-one-kill minions (taking their initiative as a group). See 'Bandit' stats in the *Monster Manual*.

Otherwise, two consecutive STEALTH checks are required to make it across safely (the DM can embellish this at their leisure) - DC 12 (majority).

At the other end of this large chamber is a set of ornate double doors. These open onto a wide staircase.

Up the staircase is the highest floor, which is quite barren. Open doors lead into empty bedrooms without curtains.

At the end of the single corridor is a winding staircase, up the tower.

PART 3 - The head of the Shmoot

“Our domain is the shadow. Stray from it reluctantly, for when you do, you must strike hard and fade away, without a trace”

— Splinter

The staircase opens onto a large conservatory, which looks out onto the rooftops of Waterdeep.

Here they will face the Grater.

Rooftop battles

Before anything else, a large muscled figure all spiked with blades on their greaves and shoulders and armour, steps out of the shadows.

Through their metal face mask they speak,
“Tortles. Not what I expected. But if you are indeed the heroes annoying my shinobi, I need to put a stop to it, now.”

Grater is calm in this battle, until his health gets below 20.

He is willing to share any information with the turtles if they ask - he sees them as inferior, so knowledge won't help them.

Orien Sagisman (The Grater)

Medium humanoid, Lawful Evil, The Shmoot

Armor Class 17

Hit Points 90 (8d10 + 10)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	14 (+4)	14 (+2)	13 (+4)	13 (+3)	14 (+2)

Skills Acrobatics +5, Athletics +5

Senses passive Perception 14

Languages Common

Challenge 5 (1800 XP)

Shinobi Threat. As a bonus action, on his first turn, Grater will (essentially) cast *Fear* on every enemy within 60ft. (p239 of *Players Handbook*)

Check. As a reaction, Grater can make an opportunity attack for every enemy that has 'entered' engaged range before his next turn.

Dark Ninja. Grater can use a bonus action to disengage.

ACTIONS

Charging blows. If Grater is within 30ft of an enemy, and not engaged, he can *Slice and Dice* and immediately charge in to use *Blades* on the same turn if he moves at least 20ft towards that enemy. This is his version of a Multi-attack.

Blades. *Melee Attack:* +5 to hit, reach Engaged, 5ft. *Hit:* (2d6 +3) slashing damage.

Slice and Dice. *Ranged Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 30 ft., one target. Grater launches projectiles. *Hit:* (3d8 + 2) piercing damage.

Deus ex machina

If the party is overwhelmed and looks like they won't be able to defeat Grater, the DM can decide to have Splinter appear. Which can shed a lot more light on the situation with Grater's true name.

Orien Sagisman completely overreacts to the presence of Shard - acting recklessly.

CONCLUSION

With Grater defeated, the ever-increasing criminal threat of the Shmoot clan has been laid to rest, for now.

The bulk of the gang flee as soon as they are aware that Grater is no more.

It is only a matter of time before another Grater shows their face. But when they do, the Turtles will be ready.

Denouement

You are back at home, it is late the next day.
After a long rest, what are you all doing?

[allow the players to paint their final scene]

A bell rings. The pizza has arrived.

Involvement

Allowing the players to describe the closing scene of the 'episode' is quite fun.